
Chapter 17.80 SIGNS

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17.80.010 Purpose and intent.

The purpose of this chapter is to create a comprehensive and balanced system of signs which will allow adequate business identification and communication with a quality appearance. Signs authorized under this chapter should:

- A. Encourage a desirable urban character consistent with the general plan;
- B. Preserve and improve the appearance of the city as a place to live, work and visit;
- C. Eliminate confusing, distracting, or dangerous sign displays which interfere with vehicular traffic;
- D. Promote commerce;
- E. Provide for fair and equal treatment of sign users;
- F. Promote ease of sign regulation administration; and
- G. Provide for eventual elimination of pre-existing, nonconforming signs on a fair and equitable basis. (Ord. 97-03 § 2 (part): prior code § 8-1.6005 (A))

17.80.020 General provisions.

- A. Lighting.

An illuminated sign may be permitted only if the lighting is subdued and does not create an adverse design circumstance, interfere with the reasonable enjoyment of surrounding properties, does not present a traffic or pedestrian hazard or otherwise present a public nuisance. Installation of any new sign illumination shall be subject to securing a sign permit.

- 2. Sign Installation.

All signs shall be installed in a safe manner and in conformance with building codes and regulations. A building permit shall be obtained as necessary for any sign installation.

3. Sign Design.

A wall or projecting sign may not exceed six inches in thickness. Signs should achieve general conformity with the Winters design guidelines, including design restrictions and/or themes specific to each designated design corridor. (Ord. 97-03 § 2 (part); prior code § 8-1.6005 (B))

17.80.030 Signs permitted in all districts.

The following signs do not require a sign permit, unless otherwise noted, and are not counted in the sign area of a business.

A. Special Event Temporary Signs.

1. Signs which advertise a specific community event such as a pancake breakfast, festival, parade, etc. shall be authorized by the director of community development. Signs shall be permitted for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days. Signs remaining beyond the approved period shall be removed by city at applicant's expense.

2. Temporary signs which advertise noncommunity activities, (such as Christmas tree sales) shall be regulated by the required temporary activity permit.

B. Memorial Signs or Tablets.

Memorial signs or tablets, names of buildings, and dates of building erection when cut into the surface of facade or a building.

C. Public Notices.

Official notices posted by public officers or employees in the performance of their duties.

D. Public and Quasi-Public Signs.

Signs required or specifically authorized for a public or quasi-public purpose which may be of any type, number, area, height, location, illumination, or animation authorized by the statute or regulatory ordinance under which the signs are erected. For signs not so authorized, a sign area not exceeding thirty-two (32) square feet and height of eight feet shall be permitted per property.

E. Vending Machine Signs.

Signs on vending machines, gas pumps, ice containers, etc. not exceeding four square feet per sign. A maximum of twelve (12) such signs are allowed per lot. The use shall include temporary advertising signs in such locations.

F. Regulatory and Safety Signs.

Governmental signs for control of traffic and other regulatory purposes, street signs, danger signs, railroad crossing signs, and signs of public service companies indicating danger and aids to service or safety, temporary signs placed by city departments.

G. Single Property Real Estate Signs.

One real estate sale/lease/rental sign on any lot provided such sign is located entirely within the property to which the sign applies does not exceed six square feet in area, and is removed within seven days after the sale, rental or lease has been accomplished. May also include up to five off-site open house "A-frame" signs, each of which may not exceed four square feet, and each of which can be placed not more than one day per week.

H. Multilot Real Estate Signs.

Signs advertising the sale, lease or rent of developments may be allowed as shown below:

1. One on-site sign advertising a multilot development of less than forty (40) acres, not exceeding thirty-two (32) square feet and eight feet in height:
2. Up to four on-site signs advertising a multilot development of forty (40) acres or more, not exceeding thirty-two (32) square feet per sign and eight feet in height. Limit of one such sign per street frontage.

I. Construction Signs.

One sign per property not exceeding fifteen (15) square feet in area or six feet in height identifying contractors, owners, designers, lenders, etc. for projects under construction on that property. The sign shall be removed within seven days of completion of the particular construction aspect identified on the sign.

J. Flags.

The flags, emblems or insignias of any nation or political subdivision.

K. Symbols or Insignias.

Religious symbols, commemorative plaques of recognized historical agencies, or identification emblems of religious orders or historical agencies, provided that no such symbol, plaque, or identification emblem shall exceed four square feet in area and that all such symbols, plaques and identification emblems shall be placed flat against a building.

L. Interior Signs.

Any sign visible only within the structure in which it is located.

M. House Numbers and Name Plates.

House numbers and name plates not exceeding three square feet in area for each one-or two-family residential building and ten (10) square feet for multifamily, commercial, office and industrial uses.

N. Political and Campaign Signs.

Political or campaign signs on behalf of candidates for public office or measures on election ballots provided that said signs are subject to the following regulations:

1. The signs may be erected not earlier than sixty (60) days prior to the election and shall be removed within seven days following the election.
2. In any residential zone no more than four stationary signs are permitted on any one parcel of land. The signs shall not exceed a combined total of twenty (20) square feet in area and, if free-standing, shall not exceed six feet in height. The signs shall not be erected in such a manner as to constitute a roof sign.
3. In any commercial or industrial zone, political signs are permitted provided all such signs do not exceed an aggregate sign area of thirty (30) square feet. The signs shall not be erected in such a manner as to constitute a roof sign.

O. Holiday Decorations.

Seasonal decorations not referring to businesses or goods.

P. Time and Temperature Signs.

Devices giving time, temperature and similar information but not having a business identification or information.

Q. Window Signs.

One sign per window opening, not exceeding four square feet in area or twenty-five (25) percent of the individual window opening area, whichever is less.

R. Freeway Information Signs.

Multibusiness signs advertising freeway oriented business near a freeway interchange may be approved subject to obtaining a sign permit from the planning commission (if the subject sign location lies within the jurisdiction of the city) and subject to the following requirements:

1. No more than one such multibusiness sign shall be allowed on the north and on the south side of State Route 128.
2. The sign shall contain space for identification of at least four businesses or centers directly served by the off-ramp.
3. No individual business identification sign shall exceed twenty-five (25) square feet.
4. Freeway information signs may not exceed a height of sixty-five (65) feet, with sign heights up to one hundred (100) feet being possible if supported by detailed line-of-sight studies, as determined by the planning commission.
5. No business identified on a multibusiness sign may have an on-site free-standing sign exceeding eight feet in height.

S. On-Premise Directional or Institutional Signs.

Signs which provide direction or instruction and are located entirely on the property to which they pertain and do not advertise a business, exceed four square feet in area, and which provide direction or instruction, such as parking lot entrance and exit location signs.

T. Off-Premise Directional Signs.

1. Off-premise signs which provide direction to general places, destinations, and collections of uses may be permitted by the planning commission, so long as the city bears no expense in placing or maintaining the signs. Examples of places appropriate for directional signs might include historic downtown, central business district, restaurants, overnight lodging, fruit packers, and the civic center.
2. To the extent feasible, multiple directional signs shall be placed as a group in one supporting structure, rather than on individual supports.
3. The planning commission will exercise discretion as to height and dimensions of signs based upon the number of destinations being identified on one sign. However, the signs should be of modest size and height. When there are several sites or destinations on one sign, there should be only one palette of colors. Off-premise directional signs should be inspected for maintenance not less than once each year. The director of community development shall have authority to require the owners to maintain signs including repainting. If maintenance is not performed, city shall remove signs at owner's expense.
4. Written authorization to erect signs from real property owners shall be obtained prior to planning commission approval. The planning commission shall have authority to condition the use of directional signs including, but not limited to, the length of time such signs may be erected.
5. The planning commission shall not approve any off-premise directional signs in violation of state statutes. (Ord. 97-03 § 2 (part); prior code § 8-1.6005 (C))

17.80.040 Signs permitted in commercial office and industrial districts.

A. Free-standing sign. One free-standing identification sign per site allowing one-quarter foot of sign area per foot of lot frontage on which the sign is to be located, not to exceed twenty (20) square feet in area nor six feet in height on a site where all buildings are set back at least ten (10) feet from the street curb or street pavement edge on which the use fronts. Where the subject property exceeds one acre in size, the maximum sign area may be increased to forty (40) square feet and height to ten (10) feet.

B. Wall sign. One wall sign per building frontage. Maximum wall sign area is determined as follows, not to exceed one-hundred (100) square feet:

For buildings with only one building frontage: one-half square foot of sign area for each ground-level linear foot of building frontage.

For buildings with multiple building frontages: one-half square foot of sign area for each ground-level linear foot of one building frontage and one-quarter square foot of signing for each linear foot of additional frontage. The basic sign area in a multitenant center may

be reallocated between businesses by the center manager based on an overall sign plan for the center.

C. Marquee Sign. One marquee sign per building occupant which does not exceed five square feet in area or is located lower than seven-feet, six-inches above the grade level below it. No sign may be placed upon the roof of a marquee.

D. Projecting Signs. One projecting sign per building, not to exceed .4 square feet for every linear foot of main entrance facade frontage, not to exceed a maximum of twenty (20) square feet. A projecting sign shall be at least eight feet above grade directly below the sign.

E. Multistory Building Directory Sign. One directory wall sign for each primary building entry to identify occupants in a multistory building. The sign may not exceed five square feet in area.

F. A-Frame Signs. One freestanding A-frame sign not exceeding an area of four square feet and three feet in height, shall be permitted in front of each business establishment subject to securing a sign permit from the community development department for the operator's safe placement of the sign along a sidewalk under the terms prescribed in this chapter. A-frame signs shall be removed from the sidewalk when the business it advertises is closed. (Ord. 97-03 § 2 (part): prior code § 8-1.6005 (D))

17.80.050 Signs permitted in planned districts.

Each sign in a planned district shall comply with regulations in this Section applicable to each use permitted by the planned district development plan. (Ord. 97-03 § 2 (part): prior code § 8-1.6005 (E))

17.80.060 Signs permitted in all other districts.

A. Free-Standing Signs. One free-standing identification sign not exceeding sixteen (16) square feet in area nor a height of five feet if all on-site building are set back at least twenty (20) feet from the street curb or street pavement edge on which the use fronts.

B. Wall Signs. One wall sign per occupant not exceeding sixteen (16) square feet in area for each building frontage on the site.

C. Residential Use. No free-standing or wall signs other than as prescribed elsewhere in this chapter may be permitted for any residential uses of property. (Ord. 97-03 § 2 (part): prior code § 8-1.6005 (F))

17.80.070 Prohibited signs.

Unless otherwise authorized by this chapter, it is unlawful to erect, reconstruct, alter, maintain, or place; and no permit shall be issued for, the following types of signs:

A. Off-Premise Signs Advertising a Specific Location, Business, Product, Use.

1. No new off-premise signs shall be allowed which advertise a specific business, product, use, etc., except as permitted herein for freeway information signs.
2. Existing off-premise signs advertising specific businesses, products, uses, etc.

shall be allowed to remain, pursuant to the nonconforming sign criteria of this section.

B. Roof Signs.

Signs attached to the roof of a building or projecting over the roof or parapet of a building.

C. Wind Activated and Balloon Signs.

Including pennants, streamers, bunting, banners, balloons or inflatable signs or figures, kites and similar devices, except as authorized for a special event temporary sign.

D. Flashing or Moving Signs.

Whether electrically or wind driven (except clocks, thermometers and traditional-type barber poles that rotate).

E. Bare Bulb Signs.

Any signs with exposed fluorescent tubes or incandescent bulbs (not including neon).

F. Damaged Signs.

Any sign with cracked or broken panels, peeling paint, missing letters, or other signs of poor maintenance shall be repaired within sixty (60) days.

Any sign which has been more than fifty (50) percent damaged or destroyed by any cause, and the damage or destruction is other than facial copy replacement, and the display is not repaired within thirty (30) days of the date of its damage or destruction, shall be removed.

G. Unauthorized Signs.

No sign may be placed on a private or public property without the permission of the owners of the property.

H. Incompatible Signs.

Any commercial sign which, whether aesthetically or by size, adversely affects adjacent commercial uses.

I. Nonconforming Signs.

See Section [17.80.090](#).

J. Hazardous Signs.

No sign may be erected in such a manner as to interfere with, obstruct, confuse or mislead traffic or create a pedestrian or vehicular safety hazard. A-frame signs permitted under Section [17.80.040](#)(F) may only be placed on a sidewalk where there is adequate width for both pedestrians and vehicle overhang from the street.

K. Signs Near Street Intersections.

No free-standing advertising sign may be erected at a street intersection within a triangular area formed by the street curb lines and their projection and a line connecting them at points forty (40) feet from the intersection of the projected curb lines. In cases where curbs do not exist, the edge of street pavement shall be used for measuring purposes.

L. Mobile Signs.

No sign may be placed upon a vehicle which is parked for the purpose of advertising to the passing public. (Ord. 97-03 § 2 (part); prior code § 8-1.6005(G))

17.80.080 Administration.

A. Sign Permit Required.

No person may erect, enlarge, or maintain a sign or modify the design or location of any existing sign without the issuance of a sign permit, unless the sign is exempt under Section [17.80.030](#).

B. Application.

An applicant for a sign permit shall submit a completed application form, processing fee (as applicable), and plan as required by the community development director.

C. Reviewing Body.

Signs shall be reviewed according to the following Table 7:

TABLE 7 SIGN REVIEW

Planning Commission Action	Zoning Administrator Action	Community Development Director Action	No Sign Permit Required
Freeway Identification Sign	Illuminated Sign	Temporary Special Community Event Sign	Permitted Signs (per Section 17.80.030 , unless otherwise noted)
Off-Premise Directional Sign	Multilot Real Estate Sign	Master Building Directional Sign	
Any Free-Standing, Wall or Marquee Signs in the CBD Historic District	Any Free-Standing, Wall or Marquee Signs in a Commercial Zone	Any Free-Standing, Wall or Marquee Signs in an Office or Industrial Zone	
All Projecting Signs			
Any Sign Variance		Signs in non-	

		residential, Commercial or Industrial Zones (per Section 17.80.060)	
		A-Frame Sidewalk Sign	

D. Findings Required.

The reviewing body or person may approve a sign permit (where required) only when it finds that all the following conditions exist:

1. The sign conforms to city ordinance requirements;
2. The design conforms to the Winters design guidelines;
3. The design is compatible with the character and design of the exterior architecture of the building(s) on the property where the sign is to be located;
4. The sign will not create a visual or safety hazard; and
5. The sign location will not impair use of the subject property, adjacent property or public right-of-way.

E. Variance.

A variance from the regulations set forth in this chapter may be granted under the procedure set forth in Chapter [17.24](#). (Ord. 97-03 § 2 (part); prior code § 8-1.6005(H))

17.80.090 Nonconforming Signs.

A. No sign which is made nonconforming by the provisions of this title may be modified in any manner which is inconsistent with this chapter, except by the replacement of sign faces within existing sign frames or by minor maintenance activities required to repair or prevent damage to signs.

B. Nonconforming signs damaged or modified more than fifty (50) percent of their replacement value, including major repairs or structural modifications, shall be brought into full compliance with this title. (Ord. 97-03 § 2 (part); prior code § 8-1.6005 (I))

This page of the Winters Municipal Code is current through Ordinance 2010-02, passed March 8, 2010.

Disclaimer: The City Clerk's Office has the official version of the Winters Municipal Code. Users should contact the City Clerk's Office for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.

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